

**Appropriations Committee
March 2, 2015
Department of Energy and Environmental Protection Budget Public Hearing**

Senator Bye, Representative Walker and members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is James Sangivanni, and I work for the State of Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection as an Environmental Analyst III. I am testifying today as a proud member of my Union, CSEA SEIU Local 2001.

There are over 4,000 dams in Connecticut. Almost 550 of these dams are considered a high or significant hazard, meaning that if they were to fail it would result in probable or possible loss of life or great or significant economic impact. Dams are an integral part of this state's infrastructure. Infrastructure is one of the Governor's (and the President of the United States) major priorities. The integrity of a dam protects the lives of the residents of this state and its natural resources.

The Dam Safety Program of the Inland Water Resources Division is an important part of Connecticut's infrastructure. CT DEEP staff use to inspect the dams in CT at a cost of \$660/dam for the state inspector to come out and inspect the dam and prepare the report. CTDEEP staffing levels have continuously decreased resulting in recent legislation that passed which shifted the inspection responsibility on to the dam owner. Now that cost will essentially double or triple for the dam owner when they have to hire a consultant to do the inspection.

As more and more dams get inspected, CT DEEP are going to come across more dams that need engineered repairs. These design repairs would need to go through the permitting process. Part of this process involves an engineering review of the permit application package by DEEP Dam Safety staff. This work is in addition to the current duties of the Department's staff which reviewing inspection reports & engineering studies, emergency responses, updates to the dam inventory, assisting dam owners, and helping the residents of Connecticut understand the importance of dam safety as well as compliance with the new legislation. Also dam owners that are non-compliant will be issued an enforcement action with penalty. I am sure that residents in the vicinity of a dam that was not inspected or improved will appreciate the diligence needed to follow through with the safety actions needed.

There are only six people in the Dam Safety group. Three of them are Tier I and two of the other 3 have 25 or more years of state experience. There are only 30 people currently in the entire Division and 6 of them are Tier I and many others have over 20 years of state experience. In the next five years the staff in this division will be decimated. The institutional knowledge that should be handed

off now and training for the next generation cannot happen because we do not have the staff to pass it on to.

As many of the dams in Connecticut are old, this infrastructure cannot go neglected due to the lack of staff with the applicable technical knowledge. This results in a potential danger to the public. Taxpayers have been investing in their safety, health, safety and natural resources in this state for decades.

We ask for your help in providing staff and resources for the Department to programs to carry out our mission. Don't let the taxpayers lose their investment in our state.

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